

Task Force reacts to Michigan court ruling stripping domestic partner benefits from public employees

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The Michigan Court of Appeals issued a Feb. 2 ruling that bars state and local governments and public universities from offering benefits to their employees based on domestic partnerships.

Statement by Matt Foreman, Executive Director

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

"This ruling by the Michigan Court of Appeals that Michigan's anti-family amendment, passed in 2004, prohibits public employers from offering domestic partner benefits to employees is exactly what we all feared would happen. We all said the amendment was so vaguely worded that it could endanger domestic partner benefits. The proponents of the discriminatory amendment, Citizens for the Protection of Marriage and the American Family Association of Michigan, insisted that the language was only about marriage and had 'nothing to do with taking benefits away.' But that's exactly what is happening and I have no doubt that's exactly what they secretly wanted.

"If this ruling is not overturned by the Michigan Supreme Court, thousands of families - gay and straight - in Michigan will lose their health insurance and other basic benefits of employment. In a state besieged by a health care crisis in which 1.1 million state residents are currently uninsured, this just goes to show that these amendments represent the worst kind of public policy. We urge the Supreme Court to recognize that employer-provided health care benefits for spouses or domestic partners are benefits of employment - not benefits of marriage - and rectify this injustice. We commend the courage of the plaintiffs and the hard work of their attorneys, especially those at the ACLU."